Empathy and emotion: morality explored in bullying

Master Thesis
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Contents

A short preface

This master thesis is inspired by my internship at the VU Amsterdam, department of developmental psychology, in combination with my fascination for metaethics. Roughly said, both disciplines deal with people and their behavior. I think people are interesting. Why do they behave, think and feel the way they do? But also, what causes their beliefs and wishes, how does that evolve around rationality and emotions? And how do we relate to each other, what is the right thing to do in a specific situation?

Research in psychology works on the explanation of behavior, looks for possible causes and results of interventions. Psychology can deal with both normal and deviant behavior, and also with moral behavior and emotion. However, it stirs clear of evaluations of behavior. Or, to quote my supervisor at the VU, Tjeert Olthof: "Psychologists like to leave the task of evaluating to theologists and philosophers." Metaethics is not exactly the discipline of making evaluations. It rather works on finding answers for questions about the nature and scope of morality. Metaethics tries to find, for example, answers to questions about the possibility of the existence of moral facts and, if they exist, about the origin of these facts. It might ask how a standard for morality can be developed. It does not necessarily ask for the content of such a standard, but rather *how* it might come about, and what we can do with it. The crossover field for these two disciplines might cover questions such as Do we, and why would we, accept the behavior that is being explained by the psychologist to be moral in nature?

This crossover area is at times rather confusing. While developing this thesis, I found myself thinking in little loops: am I trying to provide moral concepts within the theory of explanation or am I trying to use explanations of behavior to determine morality? Although confusion comes in pairs with frustration it is interesting as well. To try and solve the confusion means, at least for the confused person (me, in this case), to embark upon new insight.

My internship offered me a wonderful opportunity to investigate a concrete case study and gave me some insight in the theories of developmental psychology. Also, it provided me with the challenge of trying to adequately work on a metaethical reflection on my case study.

(1) Introduction

The subject of this thesis is empathy in psychology, biology and foremost metaethics. "Empathy is hot" was the headline of the Dutch magazine *De Groene Amsterdammer* of June 15, 2011. In this issue three books were under review. These books were titled: *The Social Animals*, *Supercooperators* and *Join the Club*. These books all discuss empathy whether in a

Darwinistic framework, or on reciprocity in light of neurological research or about the success of peer pressure and reputation building. The message of these books is the same: after half a century of egoism, individualism and increasing isolation from each other we are lucky to discover we are, at heart, social beings and this insight will lead us through the current economical and social crises. This 'discovery' was described by primatologist Frans de Waal in his books *Primates and Philosophers* and *The Age of Empathy* as well. After Richard Dawkins book *The Selfish Gene* of 1975 we seem to want to leave behind selfishness and instead turn to empathy. In her conclusion the reviewer concurred with the findings of humans being social beings, but she pointed out we are emotional, lazy and political as well and that might just as easily point to our selfish side.

The discussion often seems to go this way of social versus selfish. In this thesis I will argue that this is not the way to deal with empathy. Instead I will offer a different route to consider empathy. For doing this I will use a case study. During my internship at the VU I worked on examining research on bullying among adolescents from a moral point of view. Bullying research of the last decade mostly uses an etiological model of explanation. This model is based on biological observations that are used in evolutionary theories on the nature of humans. Bullying in this model is defined as unprovoked aggression that is intentional and goal directed (Salmivalli, 2010). The aim of the bully is to acquire social dominance within his or her peer group. Bullying is therefore considered to be a group process: it is the group that assigns the high status to the bully and this status is relative to the hierarchy of the peer group. Bullying functions in acquiring status. Research has shown bullying to cause immediate and long-term serious risk at psychological and academic problems for the victim.
Bullying does not cause, or at least less evidently so, any problems for the bully himself. These bullies are the ones that are most successful in the daily competition among their friends and classmates. The bully is capable of feeling emotions such as guilt and empathy and is capable of moral reasoning. This leads to the bully being considered, in psychological terms, to be socially skilled and morally mature.
There is a tension between the evaluation of the behavior of the bully and the evaluation of the bully himself. The behavior of the bully is evaluated to be problematic, and the bully is evaluated to be competent and mature, thus unproblematic. It is important to consider that to evaluate social competence in terms of one being successful at achieving one's goals is quite different from evaluating social competence in terms of the behavior being morally acceptable or not. There is a distinction to be made between psychological competence and moral competence. I think it necessary to think of someone who intentionally harms others as behaving problematic in social interaction.

Against the backdrop of this bullying research I will critically consider emotions, empathy and morality. Instead of thinking of aggressive behavior as the flipside of human helping behavior I think we need to align the two types of behavior and see them in the same framework. This is achieved through morality. The purpose of this thesis is to argue that we can justly hold a moral judgment regarding bullying among adolescents. I will first discuss the problems of evaluating bullying behavior within a framework of evolutionary psychological explanation. Then I will argue that we need a wider vision to adequately come to this evaluation. To come to this my main tool is the philosophical concept of emotion as gut feeling. The concept of emotions is useful to make a step from thinking in terms of psychological explanations to thinking in terms of morality. Subsequently emotions are the basis of a form of sentimentalism, the metaethical theory that I invoke to discuss bullying. The assumption for this theory is that evaluative concepts are to be understood as basic emotional reactions. This leads to questions about moral agency as approached through this

sentimentalism and applied to adolescents. Finally I will appeal to the concept of empathy to expand the concept of morality. I will shift the focus from the way empathy is perceived in psychology, as the construct that can motivate prosocial behavior and possibly inhibit aggressive behavior, to empathy as a tool to understand and acquire knowledge of some one else's values. Subsequently, empathy can be seen as a fundamental part of the morally acting agent. My research question is this: **Is it possible to use emotion and empathy as the construct that relates bullying behavior to moral behavior?** After arguing for a notion of morality that is based in emotion rather than on rational grounds, I will argue empathy to be central to morality. This allows us to consider the bully to be a moral agent and thus being able to address him in moral terms.

(2) Aggression and sociality in an evolutionary model

Primates and morality
Primatologist Frans de Waal has conducted research after social behavior among primates since the 1970's. His observations of mostly primates and bonobos have led to his articles and books on, firstly, aggression and, thereafter, social cohesion. His most recent work includes *Primates and Philosophers, how morality evolved* (2006) and *The age of empathy, nature's lessons for a kinder society* (2009). Although his plea for an empathic society is truly involved and supported by thoroughly developed descriptions of behavior, from a philosophical point of view it can be considered in a critical light. De Waal bases his idea of morality on the connection he makes between empathy and sociality /aggression. In this chapter I will examine this idea and argue against it. In the next chapter I will argue instead for a connection between emotions and morality and empathy and value.

De Waal sees a fundamental interest in each other between primates (human and nonhuman), which forms the ground on which human morality is build. This fundamental interest in each other is based in the attachment between mother and child, which is necessary in mammals for survival. Two mechanisms are essential for empathy: 'emotional contagion' meaning the feeling of the emotion or distress of a child by the mother and, because primates and humans know the difference between self and other they are capable of 'perspective taking'; they can determine what causes the distress for the other. Genuine concern based in emotional contagion and perspective taking is what constitutes empathy as described by de Waal. This kind of interaction and exchange of emotion described by De Waal is very 'basic' in the sense that it is the foundation of the connection between mother and child. Empathy is good for survival and reproduction. De Waal states "[natural selection] may not have specified our moral rules and values, but it has provided us with the psychological make-up, tendencies, and the abilities to develop a compass for life's choices that takes the interest of the entire community into account, which is the essence of human morality." (de Waal 2006). He specifically opposes the idea of humans being essentially bad, aggressive or unsocial and that we would need, for that reason, morality. De Waal challenges the idea of humans having constructed morality to suppress violent or bad urges. In this, he opposes what he calls 'Veneer Theory', which is his term for the theory that people are basically bad and that humanity has only put over a layer of veneer to regulate society. This point of view seems to be the position that Richard Dawkins argues for in *The selfish Gene* (Dawkins, 1976), in which individual genes are most important in evolution instead of concern for family genes, that is, for society. This provides a view in which animals and humans act rather selfishly than for the benefit of community. De Waal's claim is exactly the opposite: we are not bad-at-heart with a moral veneer to fix our social world; instead we are empathic, good, morally pre-disposed because 'being social' has been proven to be necessary and effective during evolution. De Waal specifically does not claim primates to be full-blown moral beings, he

however finds it utmost important to emphasize primates, including humans, to be rather good then bad heartedly. In his observations de Waal surely acknowledges non-human and human primates to be aggressive and competitive, and so he does not hold that humans are innately social or nice and friendly, but, as we will see, he does state that humans innately have emotions that favor social cohesion. De Waal's claim is not that we *need* morality to fill a gap in our way of constituting social relations but that we *are* moral beings.

While de Waal's observations and ideas might be true, we are, as he acknowledges, not yet on moral grounds. De Waal refers to David Hume's work on sympathy and Edward Westermarck's work on 'retributive emotions' to make the step from empathy and concern to morality. Although empathy and sympathy might very well be connected, the connection is not self-evident and the two are certainly not the same. Empathy is *a tool* to feel some one's emotions and sympathy *is* an emotion. De Waal does not provide a thorough theoretical framework for the connection between empathy and sympathy or for morality but suggests that not only relatedness and reciprocity are important to morality but also altruism, reputation building, principles of honesty, and conflict resolution (De Waal, 2006 p. 53). De Waal offers a range of ideas on morality and it is not clear how this exactly relates to empathy. If we would wish to explore all of these suggestions it would entail quite a lot of philosophical thinking and first of all choices that would need to be made. Would we choose to take a normative route through the exploration of substantive principles such as honesty and fairness? Or would we rather accept de Waal's slogan of 'act empathically, create a kinder society' and develop a virtue ethics? Or do we take the path of involving 'action theory' and try to find ideas of how empathy plus motivation would constitute altruism? Different possibilities are open which becomes clear as well from the comments that are offered in *Primates and Philosophers* by very diverse thinkers, including Christine Korsgaard who invokes human rationality, and Peter Singer who has developed a critique from a normative point of view. I think a pivotal issue concerns de Waal's description of empathy. His description is from a socio-biological point of view and not from an ethical point of view. De Waal pulls ethics in the discussion, but that is not done adequate enough to truly deal with morality.

At this point I would like to discuss my case study. As said, in my case study I will consider psychological research after aggressive and bullying behavior. An evolutionary framework is used to explain the behavior. Both aggression and helping and caring seem to be equally important to evolution. As explained, de Waal sees concern for community as a compass to morality. In his research he also describes aggressive behavior in abundance. Chimpanzees more so then bonobos can be highly aggressive. In the wild they have been found to kill of an entire outsider group, and within their own group of relatives aggression is present throughout daily life as well. One example of a fight over the leading role of the group among chimpanzees living in the Arnhem Zoo is clarifying: after days of tension and smaller fights among two males, one of them was butchered during the night, he was severely bitten and even his testickles were subtracted, and he died of his injuries the next day. De Waal's focus in his research is on social cohesion and descriptions of aggressive behavior allow him to show that nonhuman primates spend a considerable amount of time on reconciliation through grooming and hugging. Primates might have an innate tendency to act in favor of social cohesion but that does not mean we should neglect the innate tendency towards aggression. Behavior that is unacceptable to humans such as killing all out-group members or killing the leader to become first ranked needs to be considered in relation to morality. I will discuss parts of two comments on de Waal's *Primates and Philosophers* in relation to bullying research (those of Korsgaard and Singer). Through this discussion I will explain why I think we should not directly go from empathy to morality, but instead consider the nature of

emotions and it's relation to sentimentalism, to then finally explain my idea of what empathy actually is and how it constitutes moral agency.

Case study

The explanation of aggressive behavior and bullying
Bullying is aggressive behavior and provides an interesting case study in relation to empathy and morality because of the way it is studied in psychology and the discussion within this academic field about the social competence of the bully.

Bullying is a form of aggressive behavior and is defined as *intentionally harmful behavior*. There are two criteria that need to be met for aggressive behavior to be called bullying. The first is the repetitive character of the bullying incidents between the same bully and victim and the second is the difference in physical or mental strength between the bully and the victim. Bullying is explained in psychological research with one of two models. The first might be called the 'social deficit model' and the second the 'social dominance model'.

1. The social deficit model explains bullying behavior in terms of deficits in the social skills of the bully. These children interpret the behavior of other children incorrectly, for example by thinking of a neutral statement of a classmate as an offense or by experiencing an accidental bump as a provocation. This child will assign incorrect intentions to the behavior of others and subsequently behave aggressively in reaction to these unjust ascriptions. This behavior is often called reactive[1] aggression (Salmivalli 2010). These bullies show a lack of self-regulation and impulse control. The behavior of these bullies is called in psychological terms socially incompetent and it should improve by developing self esteem and impulse control, by evolving a sensitivity for the feelings of others and by improving the social skills of the bully (Smith et al, 2004).

2. While research on bullying progresses, a different picture of the bully has emerged and the social dominance model is used in explaining bullying behavior. Already in a 1996 article Salmivalli and colleagues saw bullying as something that is a group process (Salmivalli et al, 1996). It is considered to be social in nature and should be seen as behavior that applies not only to the bully and his victim, but also to the entire peer-group or class. Especially the last decade this concept is leading. In research, attention is directed at the social relations between all group members, including not only the bully and the victim, but also followers, outsiders and defenders. Group members are seen as having different roles in the process, driven by diverse emotions, attitudes, and motivations. The individual characteristics of the group members interact with environmental factors. Many researchers share the belief that interventions against bullying should be targeted at the peer-group level rather than at individual bullies and victims. Research is conducted into what in the group level should be changed and how. Questions in psychology are concerned with how bullies and their victims are perceived by their classmates (are they popular or are they rejected) and on, for example, how behavior of the group members can be changed by convincing outsiders who basically disapprove of bullying to act on their disapproval of the situation.

Because bullying in this model is considered to be unprovoked and deliberate, and thus a subtype of proactive, goal-directed aggression (Coie, Dodge, Terry, & Wright, 1991), conceptualization has led to the acknowledgement that bullies are not necessarily socially unskilled or emotionally dysregulated but quite skillfully use bullying in order to achieve their goals. The image of the bully in these two models is dissimilar. In the first model the aggressive behavior can be seen as the result of a lack of social competence. In the second model the deliberate and skillful act of bullying can be seen as a choice to behave aggressively.

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[1] From a philosophical point of view it would be interesting to think about the definition of bullying as *intentionallly* harmful behavior in relation to the behavior found in research as being *reactive* aggression. 'Reactive' and 'intentionally' might be mutually excluding terms: can reactive aggression be intentional?

Etiology

In their research of 2008 Olthof and colleagues have included a theory in their bullying research that has caused some discussion precisely on this issue of how to regard the bully's behavior. The theory that is used is called Resource Control Theory (RCT) and is developed by psychologist Patricia Hawley. RCT is developed as an evolutionary model to explain aggressive behavior and social competence among toddlers and adolescents.

Hawley has based her theory largely on G. C. William's *Adaptation and Natural Selection* (Williams 1966) in which he discusses evolutionary biology by arguing against notions of group selection and arguing for individual survival. Hawley has developed in line with Williams the idea that children who use both aggressive behavior (hitting and kicking) and prosocial behavior (helping and sharing) to get to their wanted resources are very successful in their behavior and can be considered to be socially competent (Hawley et al, 2007). These children are called 'bistrategics', because they use two strategies (aggressive and prosocial) to get what they want. Social competence is here defined as 'behaving effectively in interactions': successfully balancing the goals of self and others. Hawley states that, through using an evolutionary model of aggression, she has found competition in the peer group to be unavoidable. She conceptualizes social competence as a balance of 'getting along' and 'getting ahead'. Hawley thinks of getting ahead not as problematic behavior for the aggressive child, because the he achieves his goals, does not suffer any repercussions from classmates and is actually reported to have close and intimate friendships. Hawley might, as an outsider, not agree with the means of getting there, but the end, a clearly determined social hierarchy, works for the bully and therefore Hawley maintains for it to be competent behavior.

The evaluation of bullying

RCT turns out to be rather useful in explaining bullying behavior. At least some of the bullies show both aggressive and prosocial behavior, they acquire social status with their behavior. They are, for example, perceived to be popular, though not necessarily well liked by all classmates. RCT fits with the picture of bullying as a groupproces, that is, it fits with the idea of determining social relations through aggressive behavior. In using this model to explain bullying behavior Olthof and colleagues do certainly not sate that *all* aggressive adolescents are bullies and they do not state that *all* bullying behavior can be explained in this way. It might very well be found that bullying behavior involves both the striving for dominance ánd some form of social skill deficit. However, Hawley strongly objects to using RCT as a model to explain bullying behavior. She has tried specifically to negate the comparison between 'her' aggressive bistrategics and bullies (Hawley et al, in press). Her arguments are mostly based on psychological data: it basically boils down to Hawley being convinced that bistrategics are well liked and really belong to a group of friend with whom they compete aggressively. So, as opposed to bullies who need to pick on the weaker kids, Hawley thinks bistrategics are mostly aggressive and competitive with same-strength children. Bistrategics do not need to bother with the kids at the bottom of the pecking order.

I think that indeed the aggressive child 'gets ahead' in some way, but is this kind of getting ahead the behavior we wish to endorse? This, I think, exactly points to the issue I wish to discuss. Hawley takes a step beyond the limited framework of *explanation* of aggressive behavior in assigning, what she calls a "bright side" to bad behavior (as explained in her article *Aggression and adaptation: The bright side to bad behavior*). In a lecture she provided at the Evolutionary Institute in Florida (US) this became rather clear. Discussion involved whether or not to teach all children to be 'bistrategics' because of the prosocial aggressives being so successful. Also, questions arose about bistrategics being assertive or aggressive. After all, if the behavior of bistrategics was seen as positive, then did she not find these children to be assertive, rather than aggressive? This kind of discussion indicates that when considering RCT we intuitively ask for evaluation of the situation in terms of right and wrong. And this right and wrong is considered in a wider scope, beyond mere psychological terms. This is the territory of morality. In making the step from evaluating aggressive behavior within the strict psychological definition of 'social competence' to a more general point of view of valuating, we need to consider more than only the efficiency of the aggressive child in getting ahead. This issue should not only be considered from the point of view of "does the bistrategic do well for himself" but should include as well a notion of "do classmates, parents, teacher and society wish to except aggressive behavior"?

Good or bad?

There is a parallel between this case study on bullying and aggressive behavior and the work of de Waal. Both empathy and aggression are included in evolutionary models of description and explanation of behavior. Hawley emphasizes her research to show that aggressive behavior simply is part of being human. She aims at convincing others that aggressive behavior is not something to be solved easily or to be solved at all. The title of a book published by Hawley and colleagues in 2007 is *Aggression and adaptation: The bright side to bad behavior*. Hawley considers not all aggression to be bad. She underscores that getting ahead and getting along can be combined skillfully and lead to personal growth, goal attainment, and bolstering one's social standing. She considers the skill to be effectively aggressive as an 'executive's skill', the skill used by CEO's and directors of big firms. This psychological data might or might not turn out to be correct. However, this is not relevant to my thesis, because there is a catch to the matter. The catch being, that in this way the discussion comes down to the discussion about Veneer Theory that De Waal has described. Hawley has based her theory on the ideas of G. C. Williams in his book *Adaptation and Natural Selection* (Williams 1966). Richard Dawkins, the so-called opponent of de Waals' ideas, wrote his work *The Selfish Gene* partly on ideas of Williams. Hawley has, after Williams, described the function of behavior in terms of 'mutual aid, prosociality and sociability' on the one hand and 'mutual struggle, antisociality and aggressiveness' on the other. Then the evaluation of aggressive behavior as discussed by Hawley amounts to the question of de Waal: are we by nature aggressive or are we by nature social? Are we bad or good hearted? I think Christine Korsgaard has explained efficiently, and in quite a simple fashion, why morality is not about good or bad.

Korsgaard criticizes de Waal on the inaccuracy of Veneer theory. She argues Veneer theory is not the correct way to approach the issue: she does not explicitly subscribe to de Waal's great opponent, Veneer theory, but she also does not subscribe to the idea that people are necessarily 'good-at-heart'. Korsgaard considers humans as capable of self-interested action, and more strongly, of truly evil action. But at the same time she does not consider morality to be installed only as an obstruction to self-interest. That would mean that we would need rules to not behave nasty, aggressive and mean; rules to regulate aggression. Korsgaard does not see Veneer as the problem but instead states that "Moral standards define ways of relating to people that most of us, most of the time, find natural and welcome." (Korsgaard 2006, p. 101) So Korsgaard neither considers people as mean and evil nor as good and social. Instead, matters concerning humans are more complex. The matter of acting morally is not about self-interest or community-interest. De Waal aims at showing that, contrary to some believes, primates (both human and non-human) are not purely self-interested. And thus, that it would be impossible to hold as humans a motto of 'survival of the fittest' and accordingly behave purely self-interested. Korsgaard agrees that non-humans do not act out of self-interest. This is not because they are good-at-heart or essentially empathic, but Korsgaard argues that it is not thinkable that animals act out of self-interest because they lack motivation. Animals instead act on the instinct, desire or emotion that comes uppermost. Korsgaard shifts the focus of the argument by holding that self-interest in non-humans is not the issue. Rather, self-interest in humans is the real problem as it is the result of the capacity for reflection and anticipation that gives rise to morality. She sees human abilities as a source for moral capacity and for evil. Humans can be held responsible, whereas animals are beyond moral judgment. Although Korsgaard does not object to humans having a social nature, but she does object to de Waal stating that our social nature *constitutes* our morality. Korsgaard holds that humans "have a whole new way of being in the world" (de Waal 2006, p. 117). They are not only

motivated by instincts, but also by what we think is the right thing to do. In describing the ability to be 'motivated from an ought' and to be governed by principles and values Korsgaard appeals to our human nature: we know our inner motives, we are capable of making a judgment about it, and in this way we develop the capacity to be motivated by thoughts about what we ought to do and what we ought to be like.

Just as Korsgaard explains, I think the matter of bistrategics, bullies or people in general being either good or bad hearted is not the issue. Actually both research on bistrategics as well as bullies shows that these children can and do behave both aggressively and prosocially. They know very well how to hit and kick, but also how to help, share and reconcile. I think if we wish to evaluate this kind of behavior we should invoke morality but not make the evaluation in terms of the nature of people as good or bad. People are not that clear-cut. This does not mean we need to avoid the concept of empathy all together, but instead we should take a different route. To start the way to morality I think meta ethics is the correct means to an end. Empathy, aggression and morality are not, as we just saw, about whether humans are good or bad. I do not need to determine the *nature* of *human beings*, instead I need to think about the *nature* of *morality*.

Meta ethics
In trying to determine the nature of morality we have come to meta ethics. In this specific metaethical undertaking I need to find a way of how empirical findings might be connected to morality. In this, it is helpful to look at a distinction between different kinds of morality. Bernard Gert makes a distinction between *descriptive* morality and *normative* morality (Gert, online). Morality used descriptively "refer[s] to some codes of conduct put forward by a society or some other group, such as a religion, or is accepted by an individual for her own behavior" as opposed to morality used normatively that "refer[s] to a code of conduct that, given specified conditions, would be put forward by all rational persons. Thus, descriptive morality means to look at the way morality appears within a society and normative morality means to look at morality and determine the content as a rule for all. De Waal discusses morality in a descriptive way: by providing an account of his observations of primate behavior he describes morality through the interpretation of behavior. De Waal does not provide a standard or a universal account of morality. Gert states about de Waal's work: "A society might have a morality that takes accepting the traditions and customs of the society, including accepting authority and emphasizing loyalty to the group, as more important than avoiding and preventing harm. […] This kind of account, which makes loyalty almost equivalent to morality, seems to allow some comparative and evolutionary psychologists to regard non-human animals as acting in ways very similar to ways of acting that are regarded as moral." (Gert, online, under Descriptive Definitions of "morality"). Gert explains the problem of the way a sociobiologist, like de Waal, might take morality as it appears in society, to be similar to morality as we conceptualize it. But this similarity is not self-evident.

The distinction between descriptive and normative morality can be exemplified by discussing part of Peter Singer's comment to de Waal's *Primates and Philosophers*. Singer makes a clear cut between biology and philosophy. He agrees with de Waal that "human nature is inherently social and that the roots of human ethics lie in evolved psychological traits and patterns of behavior that we share with other social mammals, especially primates" (Singer 2006, p. 142), but does not agree with the strong claim of de Waal, that "All of human ethics derives from our evolved nature as social animals". Singer discusses the ability to reason as a separate and additional source of morality. How differently Singer considers morality from the way de

Waal becomes clear from the way they both consider in-group /out-group functions. De Waal states that humans always define, in line with biological findings, 'their own' such as family and friends as in-group members. Everybody else is considered as out-group. This will lead to, for example, favoring in-group members in times of shortage. We will first consider family before the rest of the world when there is a lack of resources such as food. This is a fact that de Waal considers *to be part of* human morality. Likewise, Hawley's bistrategics, and bullies too, take good care of their in-group members: they share resources, they help each other (in bullying as well as other things) and they reconcile after fights.

Even though Singer subscribes to in-group / out-group functions as being a biological fact, it is in his view, contrary to de Waal's, explicitly *not part of* human morality. For Singer, we enter moral ground *through reason* in a "…morality that goes beyond our own group and shows impartial concern for all human beings". And this might well be seen as a veneer over the nature humans share with other social animals, according to Singer, and he formulates this 'veneer' in terms of his, basically normative, utilitarian position on morality. While Singer explicitly does accept evolutionary findings, he does not consider it to be all of morality. He subscribes elsewhere (Singer 1999) that we can discuss human evolution to find out more about it, so that policies can be grounded on the best available evidence of what human beings are like, for example - most people will respond positively to genuine opportunities to enter into mutually beneficial forms of cooperation, promote structures that foster cooperation rather than competition, and attempt to channel competition. But, warns Singer: "…beware to reject any inference from what is 'natural' to what is 'right'".

Gert indicates the problem of simply jumping with a principle found in sociobiology (in-group out-group in this case) to morality, and Singer deals with this by leaving in-group / out-group as a biological fact behind, and instead turn to normative principles.

While empirical data can provide us with a detailed picture of underlying mechanisms of morality (in-group/out-group can be considered to be such a mechanism), metaethics should be able to determine what empathy as a concept entails and how it is related to morality.

(3) Emotions and sentimentalism

Empathy in sociobiology

Empathy is basically a non-moral phenomenon. De Waal describes it as a functional mechanism for survival that has its origin in the attachment between mother and child. When a child is in need of care, food, defense or shelter, the mother should be capable to react to these needs efficiently. A screaming or wining infant has an effect on its mother. The mother will experience the emotional distress of her young which is called 'emotional contagion'. The mother emotionally feels the need of her young. This emotional contagion is neurologically visible in the brain and seen as "an automated response over which we have limited control" (de Waal 2009, p. 43). Some form of cognition is necessary to identify with the child and estimate it's situation to be able to react effectively. This form of cognition is described as bodily process. De Waal describes identification to happen through body mapping and therefore " cognition runs via the body" (de Waal 2009 p. 59)" Primates imitate each other a lot. This imitating allows them to be able to identify with each other and they learn to take the other's perspective. It is important to consider this capability of body mapping because it explains how a mother chimp can understand not only, through emotional contagion, that the little chimp needs help, but also what he needs. This allows for chimps to coordinate their actions. When a child is behind on the group while travelling through trees and calls out for the mother she will be affected by the call, and she will know what to do, like for example, place herself as a bridge in between branches that are to far apart for the little

chimp to cross on it's own. Described in this way empathy can be considered to be a tool that allows for emotions to pass from one chimp or person to another chimp or person: emotional distress one way and an emotional reaction to the distress the other way. I will come to discuss empathy more elaborately toward the end of this text, and expand the concept. Important to this expansion is a consideration about cognition de Waal has made. He considers cognition to run through the body, which might be partly true. However, I think that when speaking of cognition and empathy we need to involve reason as well. First it is important to talk about emotion, sentimentalism and moral agency, to then understand the expansion to the concept of empathy I wish to make.

De Waal spends part of his essay *Primates and Philosophers* on the work of Edward Westermarck, who was one of the first philosophers and sociologists to write about morality including humans and animals, evolution and culture. De Waal discusses Westermarck's work to underscore the importance of emotions to morality. Having inclinations and desires is important to, literally, move. Without emotions we do not care for what is in front of us (De Waal, 2006 p.18). Emotions are considered to be essential to morality by de Waal and looking at de Waal's observations on primates it is clear that the emotions are part and parcel of both social and aggressive behavior. De Waal discusses shortly the difference Westermarck described between moral and nonmoral emotions. "Moral emotions ought to be disconnected from one's immediate situation: they deal with good and bad at a more abstract, disinterested level. It is only when we make general judgments of how anyone ought to be treated that we can begin to speak of moral approval or disapproval." (de Waal, 2006 p. 20) Emotions considered as moral in a more 'disinterested' level is rather doubtful to me. The idea of a disinterested level implies something like objectivity in the emotion as opposed to emotions being subjective. I think moral emotions might be socially or culturally developed, and thus in relation to a general group of people, but emotions remain of personal interest to the one holding them. In this chapter I will consider emotions first as gut feelings, to then attribute a role to cognition, and not disinterest, to further develop an account of morality. Because empathy is not an emotion but rather a tool or construct through which emotion passes, I will only in the next chapter (4) come to the concept of empathy, and describe a rational element in it in relation to acquiring values.

Basic emotions

What are emotions? Defining the ontology of the emotions in moral philosophy has led to quite some discussion. Paul Griffiths (Griffiths, 2003) has developed the idea that we have to consider different kinds of emotions as different entities, and he explains contemporary research on the basic emotions. This kind of investigation began with Darwin's experiments, which tried to prove the existence of some 'basic emotions', shared universally and biologically implemented in the human nature. These kinds of experiments were proposed again in the 1960s, particularly with the works of psychologist Paul Ekman. The result of those investigations was the consensus that in all human populations and cultures it is possible to find certain 'basic emotions', which represent a part of our evolutionary inheritance. These emotions are commonly called: fear, anger, disgust, sadness, joy and surprise (or the 'Big Six'). Each basic emotion is a response to a particular stimulus and has a distinctive facial expression. Discussion on this issue seems to have led most emotion theorists to conclude that emotions at least originate in evolution although we need to include social and /or cultural learning as well for a full ontology of emotions.

Also, in psychology, gut feelings are described by Jaak Panksepp as basic emotions. In his article on affective neuroscience Panksepp describes basic emotions on grounds of his studies after neural mechanisms of emotion(Panksepp, 1992). He thinks there is strong evidence for

four distinct executive systems in the brain, which he calls rage, fear, expectancy and panic systems. Panksepp claims these systems generate behavioral tendencies that have served evolution, such as "… offensive attack, flight, separation calls, rough-and-tumble play, and foraging-exploratory activities …" (Panksepp, 1992). This behavior is accompanied by affective feelings. Panksepp means, by calling certain emotions basic, they are genetically programmed. The criterion of being genetically programmed includes a universalistic notion of the emotions. It shows a picture of the emotions in a way all people might have them, programmed in us for evolutionary reasons.

We can see that within an evolutionary framework we can consider emotions that lead to 'getting ahead', that is of emotions that lead to aggressive behavior, as intrinsically part of being human (like Hawley does), but also, we can consider other emotions that serve to avoid separation, to promote play, to install fear and to cause us to search for food, as intrinsically part of nature. The basic systems described by Panksepp (rage, fear, expectancy and panic) are accompanied by a wide range of emotions.

Matters of concern

We have come away from this evolutionary situation. We are not chimpanzees and we are not in the woods any more on all fours. Also, we need to consider emotions not only as neuro images or survival mechanisms, but in the way they manifest in people. This will lead to understand what it *means* to have these emotions.

Justin D'Arms and Daniel Jacobson have discussed emotions in terms of 'natural emotions', which is a synonym to the term basic emotions. They define these as "products of relatively discrete special-purpose mechanisms that are sensitive to some important aspect of human life" (D'Arms and Jacobson 2003 p. 138). This definition shows a parallel to Panksepp neuro images in terms of 'special purpose mechanisms' and D'Arms and Jacobson conceptualize emotions as functional and pre-linguistic. They argue (D'Arms and Jacobson, 2005) for a view on the evolutionary base of emotions similar to Griffiths. However, they include in their list of natural emotions more then Griffiths does, for example: amusement, anger, contempt, disgust, embarrassment, envy, fear, guilt, jealousy, joy, pity, pride, shame, and sorrow.

D'Arms and Jacobson's natural emotions can be considered to be gut feelings. With this, an important issue evolves around the discussion of the priority of evaluative judgment and emotional response: which comes first? Do we explain our emotion through the explanation of thought, or do we explain our evaluations in terms of emotions? D'Arms and Jacobson argue that emotion comes first: the evaluation of a situation as, let's say dangerous, is considered to be *construed* or *perceived* as dangerous, as opposed to be *believed* as dangerous. To have an emotion simply means to experience affect that can be seen as functionally understood appraisal of a situation that involves physiological changes. D'Arms and Jacobson explain this gut feeling with an example of fear: even though one might construe oneself to be in immanent danger, it does not follow that in order to feel fear one needs to hold the *concept* of immanent danger. This basic gut feeling does not involve cognition in the sense of rational evaluative judgments about a situation. Another way of explaining this is to look at Jesse Prinz's description of emotions becoming conscious in the way other perceptual states do, like seeing color or hearing sounds. He describes emotions as fast and automatic gut feelings (Prinz, 2004).

The concept of natural emotions that D'Arms and Jacobson hold does no longer only include evolutionary concepts such as survival and reproduction, but, as we saw in their definition, it includes 'sensitivity to some important aspect of human life'. And Prinz states emotions to be about the world: " … I think emotions […] represent such things as dangers, losses, and offenses, because they are set up to be set off by such things. [Emotions] are appraisals

because they represent matters of concern." (Prinz, 2004). Thinking shortly back to Christine Kosrgaard's comment on how people have a whole new way of being in the world and morality being far more complex that what we can deduct from animal behavior, I think considering emotions and humans I can subscribe to Korsgaard's thinking. While primates experience dangers as well as humans do, they will not in the same way experience losses and offenses. Even at a gut feeling-level we take different things in different ways to matter to us than primates do.

Sentimentalism
Both Prinz and D'Arms and Jacobson base a (different) form of metaethical sentimentalism on their concept of the emotions. Basically Prinz holds that to make a moral judgment is to react with a specific emotion towards the event that is being morally judged. Prinz holds emotions to be bodily appraisals that are evolved by learning. He proposes a hybrid theory that assigns a role to cultural learning and includes adaptations and sociality as well. He states: "… evolutionists are right to think that emotions originate in our genes, constructionists are right to emphasize enculturation, and defenders of hybrid views are right that we can have it both ways." (Prinz, 2004) Through describing the way emotions relate us to the world Prinz describes how he conceives emotions to be in involved in the way we make moral judgments. He provides a foundation for our moral gut feelings by showing that they include evaluations that have an evolutionary base and a base of cultural and social learning. His metaethical theory suggests that morality emerges through the course of emotional conditioning. Emotional conditioning means that we test our moral gutfeeling on a daily base in relation to our cultural and social environment. We do not rationally make up principles for morality.
With Prinz we might come to see how moral judgments can be considered different from mere emotional or social judgments. Emotions, to Prinz, are simple perceptions of bodily changes, but they carry information by being 'calibrated' to matters of concern and that is where morality emerges. The way I interpret this idea is that through learning what it means to hold an emotion in relation to the way events are valuated by one's culture and social environment, a person develops his inner morality. One's culture or social group sets the moral standard and one's personal way of measuring the moral acceptability or unacceptability of a situation is related to, or leveled with, this cultural standard. Emotions get *calibrated* through cultural information and are socially constructed and thus give rise to morality: "… patriotism emerges when joy is recalibrated to national symbols and the accomplishments of fellow citizens. Guilt emerges when sadness gets recalibrated to personal transgressions." (Prinz, 2004). In considering my case study of bullying again I think we can think of different emotions being 'calibrated'. Resentment emerges when the anger and sadness of the victim is calibrated through the disapproval of aggression and exclusion. Disapprobation of bullying can be calibrated to blame by holding the bully accountable.

Calibrations and bullying
Prinz describes we are 'moved by' our moral judgments. This is what de Waal claims as well: without emotion we will not, literally, move. If we do not care for what is in front of us, then why try to get it (help it, attack it)? When (dis)approbation occurs Prinz calls this a 'response-dependent' account of morality: "…the bad just is that which causes disapprobation in a community of moralizers" (Prinz, 2006). This account helps explain that moral facts have practical implications. If morality depends on the response we show in reaction to certain situations this means we will be motivated by our emotions and therefore find morality itself

to be motivating. This emotion is after all what makes us move[2], according to Prinz (and de Waal). He emphasizes the practical implications to explicate that the idea of morality centrally evolving around emotions means more then to just react emotionally. Instead it has an effect in the world. According to Prinz the practical implication looks like this: "When we say that dishonesty is wrong, we are asserting that it is outrageous, and that fact can guide behavior, evoke punitive attitudes, and convey commitments. Far from undermining morality, the response-dependent account helps to explain why moral facts have practical implications." (Prinz, 2008). When we evaluate dishonesty we convey commitments, like, for example, the commitment to honesty. Prinz's argument is this: "If moral judgments are sentimental, and they refer to response-dependent properties, then the judgment that killing is wrong is self-justifying because killing elicits the negative sentiment expressed by that judgment and having the power to elicit such negative sentiments is constitutive of being wrong" (Prinz, 2006). This means we have acquired through cultural and social learning and incorporated into our emotions a measure for determining that dishonesty does not only upset us somehow, but that it is actually *wrong*. I think, Prinz explains how we might, by simply looking at the world, come to say something like: I really feel this, in my gut, to be wrong and so it is wrong. This is an argument in the absence of evidence. However Prinz claims to provide the evidence by pointing to an event such as killing having two properties that necessarily occur simultaneous, namely the properties 'evoking a negative sentiment' and 'wrongness'. Or, as he describes it "the emotion serves as the vehicle of the concept 'wrong' in much the same way that an image of some specific hue might serve as the vehicle for the thought that cherries are red." (Prinz, p. 34)

This would mean that to judge bullying to be wrong it would convey a commitment to 'not bullying'. Does the bully think it is wrong to bully? Yes, probably so, because when asked why he bullies, he provides a justification for his action. Thinking he is in need of a justification in combination with him blaming the victim indicates he knows his actions are wrong. However, the bully also feels bullying to be fun or rewarding, maybe more so then considering it to be wrong. The fact that the bully does not act according to his moral judgment of bullying being wrong is very well possible. People do not always act according their moral judgments. A bully can judge bullying to be wrong, but still do it. However, as we saw, Prinz holds moral judgments, based in emotion, to be motivating. Then why is the bully not motivated to not bully? He might make this judgment based on cognitive reasons and not be involved emotionally, and accordingly not act morally. Him disapproving bullying is then rather a matter of providing an answer that seems to fit the rules. But I do no think this idea holds, the bully himself after all invokes morality by appealing to blame and providing justifications. Then, does he weigh a moral judgment versus a judgment about fun? Or maybe, one moral judgment and one issue of pride? One judgment saying bullying is wrong and the other saying bullying is right because it provides him with social status and pride? We can think of this situation showing some type of relativism. Prinz indicates his sentimentalist position to be some type of speaker-relativism: "When I say that something is wrong, I refer (perhaps unwittingly) to the property of causing emotions of blame in me." As Prinz indicates speaker-relative response-dependent theories of moral concepts deal with disagreement like this: "If 'wrong' means 'wrong for me' then debates about what is wrong turn out to be

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[2] The motivational internalist believes that there is an internal, necessary connection between one's conviction that X ought to be done and one's motivation to do X. Whether or not we can consider this form of sentimentalism to be internally motivating might be more elaborately discussed with Bernard Williams' text on internalism and externalism (Williams, B. (1982) *Moral luck* Chapter 8 'Internal and External Reasons' Cambridge University Press).

spurious. That's an unhappy result. People reside in different moral worlds."

Maybe the bully holds two emotions that both involve morality, one of disapprobation of bullying and one of being proud of the status he has acquired. I think an interesting moral calibration can happen if we look at joy in the bully that might be calibrated to pride through achieving social dominance. Bullying researchers describe what they call a 'class norm' versus a 'popularity norm'. The class norm is the norm for non-bullying behavior, that is the norm that indicates how most children wish to be treated. The popularity norm is the norm in which popularity is most important. This means that when a popularity norm is prevalent in a class, bullying is more easily accepted, because bullies are perceived as being popular. Acceptation or rejection of behavior is correlated to these norms. That means that if there is more bullying behavior in a class, it is more easily accepted by the class. Bullying attributes this way to a negative atmosphere in the class, which causes children to reject each other more than to accept each other in general. In bullying research this process is considered to show a moral disengagement between children. With this term it is meant that the classmates are not morally involved with each other anymore, but instead are appealed to the popularity norm, which indicates bullying to be all right as it installs popularity. Somehow we could then state that if popularity is the social norm in a class, the joy that a bully experiences through achieving social dominance, by means of bullying, can be calibrated to pride. This idea is described strongly from a first-person perspective of the bully. It does not include an outsiders perspective that would include the idea that this popularity norm is morally problematic because it endorses bullying but also because it is contradictory with a common sense of justice or equality: the rejected children are prone to depression and are effected in their learning skills. Bullying enlarges the inequality between students.

Showing this kind of relativism in morality underscores the bully to reside in a moral world and points to the fact that a bully can be addressed in moral terms. This idea is not new. Hawley has described 'her bistrategics' as using morality as a tool. She means to indicate they know very well what they are doing and use their abilities for moral reasoning to actually sustain bullying. By, for example, assigning blame to the victim, which happens quite a lot ("he asked for it by being so weird") the bully frees himself of blame.

What this story points out is a limitation in Prinz's sentimentalism. It is hard to account for immoral behavior with his account of morality. In his article 'The Significance of Moral Variation' Prinz describes his relativist position as being problematic: "Of all the views I hold in philosophy, none disturbs me more than metaethical relativism". He describes how he thinks in some way of morality as of food taste in the sense that it is hard to convince some one with different taste, or different morality of his 'wrongness'. Prinz provides two examples to clarify his position. The first is the case of slavery in which he compares slaves to prisoners who might not like prison, but do not find prison by principle morally unjust. I think the situation with slaves is quite different. Prisoners are incarcerated, probably against their will, but as a punishment for their own unlawful action. Slaves have not committed any crime and this is exactly the reason why holding them captive is considered to be morally wrong. I really do not know why Prinz would think slaves themselves would not have considered slavery to be morally wrong. Why not? The second example is that of a twelve-year-old girl being forced into marriage. Prinz states that while Western cultures might find this repellent, he doubts whether our reasons for thinking of this forced marriage as repellent would provide any reason for that society to think the same. A society favoring tradition, and considering this kind of marriage as beneficiary for the community will not care for our reasons. To impose our values would be a bad idea as well, and presupposing objectivity about values does not hold for Prinz. I cannot go into the matter of relativism and objectivity elaborately in this thesis, but I will present one possible view on this. If we consider the school or

schoolyard as a mini-society (a mini-culture) we can see that relativism is hardly acceptable. As described above we might come to a situation in which the popularity norm (thus the accepting of bullying) prevails more and more, thinking of the classmates residing in one moral world and outsiders in another. Why would we not include more than only the sentiments of the bully that are dominant in this case? Why would we not look for and create space for opposing values as well? I think that the focus on gut feelings, excluding cognitions and determining morality in such a personal way is too limited. We need to describe a way to account for the emotions, and values, of more and several people. This is where the concept of empathy comes in. Instead of sliding into the first person perspective of the one making the moral judgment we need to maintain or acquire a third person perspective and the principle of emotional conditioning as described by Prinz is, in my view, not sufficient.

Before discussing empathy and cognition I should first address the issue of moral agency and adolescents. I need to make sure that adolescents are not beyond moral judgment because of their immature age. Considering sentimentalism I have already found that we can address bullies in moral terms, but by reflecting on the way adolescents can be considered to be moral agents can provide additional information on the moral picture that can be constructed in my case study.

Moral agency and moral development

Can we consider an adolescent to be a moral agent? We can think of ourselves as agents who sometimes act on the basis of a moral decision or through deliberation involving moral considerations. We ask each other after the reasons for our actions, we sometimes or maybe often think and talk about what to do. We think and discuss in terms of value, expectations and justifications. Moral agency can be defined in different terms. Generally speaking we can think of a moral agent as a person being capable of making moral judgments about the rightness and wrongness of actions.

Considering this general notion of moral agency we can see adolescents to have capabilities to act morally. They have moral emotions such as guilt and they are capable of providing justifications for their actions. Adolescents are not mature yet, in age nor in moral capacities. Moral development has been described in several ways. Lawrence Kohlberg emphasized the importance of moral reasoning and Martin Hoffman has incorporated a strong sense of moral emotions. The levels of Kohlberg show us a development in moral reasoning from an adherence to rules, backed by punishment, to living up to others' expectations, fulfilling duties to which one has agreed to contributing to society. The last stages of 'principled moral reasoning' include being aware that people hold a variety of values, understanding values and rights such as life and liberty, and the final stage is the ability to follow self-chosen ethical principles, judging social agreement by the extension which they rest on such principle. These last principled or post-conventional levels are not even reached by many adults. Jerome Kagan, in "Morality and its Development" (Sinnott-Armstrong, 2008), sketches five broad stages in human moral development. In the first stages children seem able to deal already with good and bad for themselves and others, with feelings of guilt and notions of normativity. In the fifth stage (between five and ten years of age) "children form an understanding of the abstract concepts of fairness and the ideal". The psychologist Grazyna Kochanska has emphasized the need to consider in moral development cognitive processes, but also emotional and self-related processes and conduct as well. We see different ideas of moral development, which evolve around cognition, emotion and behavior.

Adults appeal to these moral abilities but do not return the consequences of immoral behavior in ways of punishment to these children. Adolescents can be considered to be 'developing moral agents'. Among children we see morality as well. Children assign moral status to others, first based on the ability of the other to perceive and suffer, at a later age also based on

their ability to think. If we look at bullying behavior we see moral concepts, for example questions on blame and responsibility are involved in research. Psychologists look at consequences of moral action involved in bullying. In this context in research it was found that victims were better adjusted in classrooms when others shared their plight and when they could attribute the blame to bullies. In research on the justification offered by bullies for their behavior it has become clear that bullies often assign blame to their victims to sustain bullying ('he bullies himself'; 'he gets angry easily'; 'he is different'; 'he does not belong') (Olthof, 2010). Attributional processes of blame play a role in victimization and irrespective of their role children blame the victim. Defenders do not join in the bullying because they feel sorry for the victim, despite thinking the victim is to be blamed. Instead, they seem to think that bullying is just not done.

Determining whether an adolescent can be considered to be a moral agent or not does not only pivot on capabilities and stages of moral development. Although research on babies, young children and, recently, autism and psychopathology provides information on capabilities, development and impairment, this does not necessarily include an idea of what we expect from a moral agent. Assigning blame to someone means to hold a relation between capacities and moral expectations. Moral agency points to our inclination to justify those actions that transgress the expectations that regulate our social environment. I think we can find a notion of what might be called an 'expectation for responsibility' among adolescents. We expect adolescents to behave in a way towards others; such as they would wish to be treated themselves. In bullying this becomes clear through interventions that have recently been designed. These interventions rest on the idea that if the children who disapprove of bullying would act on their disapproval, they could solve the problem at least partly. If the victim has at least one friend, he or she feels more defensible. And as we saw before, speaking out against bullying can uplift the class norm instead of letting the popularity norm prevail. Adolescents considering each other to be moral agents do not necessarily always act in a morally correct or mindful way. Sometimes adolescents (and adults too) desire to do something bad or are not appealed to doing the right thing. This does not mean adolescents are immoral or that we sanction them severely. We point out what they did, appeal to their sense of morality and hope for improvement. But the moral expectation does not recede because of noncompliance.

Based on having expectations for moral behavior among adolescents we can consider adolescents to be moral agents. However, they are not yet mature, something that becomes clear through not sanctioning adolescents as severely as we sanction adults. Adolescent are moral agents 'under construction'.

(4) Empathy

Complexity and the need for cognition

So far I have described that morality is not about sociality versus aggressiveness, but instead we can think about morality through considering emotions. Conceptualizing emotions as gut feelings provides a useful form of sentimentalism with which we can address bullies in moral terms. However, emotions defined as gut feelings alone describe morality in a too limited way.

To expand the concept of emotions I will involve cognition. If we look at the way anger is conceptualized among cognitivists in emotion theory the complex nature of emotions will become clearer. Cognitivists in emotion theory consider emotions to be constituted by belief, as opposed to the position of Prinz who sees emotion as an appraisal in which a gut feeling is construed. The biggest proponent of cognitivism, Robert Solomon acknowledges (in line with

Prinz's ideas) that anger can be bodily, as an experience downing on you, and that anger is then seen as discomfort and frustration. However, for it to be truly an emotion anger needs blame. Solomon connects emotion with morality by means of blame, and this includes cognition or reason. Upon assigning blame (or praise) to an action or oneself we have entered moral grounds through evaluating an action in terms of right or wrong. Prinz actually refers to Solomon when he discusses anger and agrees with him: "… it is possible all bouts of anger are strategic choices. Anger, after all, seems to involve a fairly complex conceptualization of the world. Constructionists argue that, to be angry, we need to construe something as an offense, and that requires the deployment of subtle, culturally informed moral judgments. Anger is not an animal reflex, but a sophisticated moral attitude." (Prinz, 2004)

What is the place of cognition in emotion? It is necessary to invoke cognition in relation to morality specifically to take a distance from our immediate reactions at some point. Which point this is, becomes clear through considering D'Arms and Jacobson's concept of emotions, which includes more then mere mechanisms, such as Prinz's 'calibration files'. D'Arms and Jacobson have discussed emotions in terms of natural emotions but also in terms of more complex emotions. They describe a prelinguistic and a linguistic system for the emotions. The prelinguistic system is the one in which we see gut feelings (also called natural or basic emotions) as I described in chapter three. For more complex emotions in the linguistic system, D'Arms and Jacobson invoke the term 'cognitive sharpenings'. Cognitive sharpenings function to evaluate emotional gut feelings on their 'fittingness'. It means to evaluate whether, after considering them critically, we still think the emotion we hold to be appropriate; we reflect on whether or not it is justified to hold this emotion. Resentment is, for example, considered to be the cognitive sharpening of anger. D'Arms states about the more complex emotions: "... it seems that our emotion terms are semantically tied so strongly to thoughts attributable to the agent that one can only correctly apply to agents to whom one also attributes the relevant thought. One can not properly call someone resentful, say, unless one attributes to him a moral complaint against the person or arrangement he resents—a complaint, that is, that one takes him to be framing in moral terms (of wrongdoing, unfairness, etc.)." (D'Arms, 2008) D'Arms and Jacobson emphasize the distinction between the emotion and the concept of an emotion, such as the distinction between jealousy and defection, anger and slights, shame and disability of mine, contempt and disability of yours. Anger turning into resentment, thus moving from the emotion to the concept of the emotion, defines a very clear role for cognition. D'Arms and Jacobson think, "that resentment is a category of moral psychology but apparently not of biological psychology". With incorporating a notion of wrongdoing into anger, resentment emerges and with this form of cognition morality emerges (thereby leaving the territory of biological psychology and entering the one of moral psychology). Although this principle of 'cognitive sharpenings' resembles the way 'calibrations' happen in Prinz's account of sentimentalism, D'Arms and Jacobson specifically assign a role to cognition whereas for Prinz this process stays on the level of gut feelings.

Norms

D'Arms and Jacobson endorse sentimentalism by stating that to hold something valuable is to think that, firstly, certain emotional reactions to it are appropriate: shame, fear, envy, etc. And in a process of reflecting on the appropriateness of the emotion we then involve cognition. This is where D'Arms and Jacobson appeal to the idea of response-depedent morality, like Prinz does. However they elaborate more on this idea. D'Arms sees his idea of sentimentalism as including second-order and thus normative judgments of appropriateness. The judgment does not include an emotion that we are *disposed* to feel, but rather an emotion that we *favor* to feel. His version of sentimentalism allows for the possibility of divergence

between judgment and sentiment, by adopting a second-order approach. "To apply a response-dependent concept U to an object X (i.e. to think that X is U) is to think it appropriate (merited, rational, justified, warranted) to feel an associated sentiment F towards X." (D'Arms, 2005) The relationship between the concept and the sentiment is normative: to judge that something is dangerous is to think that it is rational or appropriate to feel fear toward it.

Now I have described a way to involve cognition in emotion. However there is a second issue that needs to be addressed to expand Prinz's account of sentimentalism. Prinz argues that his concept of the emotions can shed light on what we *ought* to do. He argues that we can, through introspection, find our own moral standards. He then places great emphasis on what we do when we review our values. "The process of reviewing our values, searching for inconsistencies, and deciding what to do is a central part of normative ethics." And this valuing, he claims, we do in regard to our own value system. "I think philosophical work in normative ethics is an internal, value-expressive project, and normative theories are usually systematic extrapolations of values that the intended readers of such theories already endorse." (Prinz, 2008) Prinz considers introspection to be the base of our value system[3]. Whereas Prinz is convinced that when we discover what we value personally, we discover the norms that bind us, I think this is only part of the way to go. I consider Prinz's theory to be limited in the sense that it evolves purely around the person holding the emotions. Prinz holds morality to deal with emotions towards oneself and not with emotions towards the other person. He opposes the idea that morality involves 'sharing emotions' (Prinz, forthcoming). I am not sure that sharing emotions is a goal in itself while acting morally, but we should be aware and have knowledge of other people's emotions and of their values to adequately deal with morality. Introspection and reviewing our own values is not enough.

Without determining the content of this norm we can look at how to get there. Prinz holds that from a first-person perspective the emotional response tells us that something is wrong: "there is often an immediate, causal transition from perception of an event to representation of that event as wrong" He therefore considers moral judgments to appear to us as intuitions, rather than inferences. While this might be correct in some cases, I think in many other cases there is more to it. Some cases are more complex in their conceptualization of the world.

To come to moral standards, we need to determine in what way we can think about the normative relationship between a sentiment and the concept. To relate an emotion to the concept of an emotion we should not look for emotions at a 'disinterested level' (which de Waal suggested), but rather look at the way we think of adolescents as moral agents. I described an idea of 'expectation for responsibility', which means to ask for a certain measure of reciprocity among classmates. For a full account of sentimentalism we not only need introspection but we need to relate to others as well. While empathy as described in sociobiology seems to be a good start to get to a form of reciprocity, I think I need to describe a rational element in empathy. This rational element offers the possibility to acquire knowledge of the values of others.

Empathy in psychology
Empathy in developmental psychology is defined as " … a vicarious affective response that is more appropriate to someone else's situation than to one's own situation." (Hoffman, 2000) In psychology empathy is thought to arise in people in different forms, which conceptualize

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[3] Prinz hereby refutes the distinction usually made (and mentioned earlier in this thesis when discussing Peter Singer) between an 'ought' and an 'is'. I will not discuss this is-ought dichotomy here.

empathy in different ways: a newborn baby might cry reactively to the sound of someone else's cry; empathy can arise on direct association, which means that on seeing some one get hurt it can trigger a memory of getting hurt yourself and thus make one relive that distress or pain; or empathy can occur through motor mimicry as described by Theodor Lipps: the observer imitates the other and these slight imitation movements cause the distress in the observer; by reading a letter or seeing a picture that triggers the distress (symbolic); by role taking, imagining one self in the position of the other person.

The emphasis in psychological research is on empathic *responding* (Eisenberg, 1986). That means, specifically on *reactions* to empathic feelings and cognitions are considered in psychology to show empathy, such as helping and sharing. Empathy is accordingly considered as a motivator to help others because "The best way to reduce one's empathic distress may ordinarily be to get rid of its source, namely, the other's actual distress". (Hoffman, 2000) From this conceptualization of empathy as motivator to prosocial behavior it is understandable that the discussion about aggression versus empathy often turns out as a discussion about sociality versus selfishness. However, I think there is one issue to consider: we do not need to connect empathy necessarily to sympathy. Empathy does not need to lead to feeling sorry for some one and subsequently lead to helping behavior. Rather, we should disconnect the *response to* empathy from the *concept of* empathy. That means that I argue for empathy to include emotional contagion, perspective taking and an evaluation of the situation at hand. Apart from how we might respond in behavior, I think by taking an empathic stance we, temporarily, let go of our own perspective, which allows us to consider the values of others. Empathy can be the gateway to any kind of emotion, not just distress. While distress was maybe the leading emotion in the evolutionary situation between mother and child, I think we have developed from there. We can empathically feel some one's anger or guilt as well as their joy or sadness.

The concept empathy

The concept of empathy is discussed by Justin D'Arms in relation to evaluative inquiry (D'Arms, 2000) He discusses empathy as an epistemological tool, with which we can acquire knowledge or justified beliefs about values. This knowledge allows us to come from an emotional evaluation to a moral judgment. He describes, "propensities and susceptibilities to mutual influence are crucial to successful social interaction" (D'Arms, 2000) and he considers emotional convergence and divergence to derive from empathy. Empathy in its epistemological function involves both perspective taking and emotional contagion. Empathy then produces knowledge of other minds: evaluative inquiry is inquiry into what has value and in doing that we take a distance from our immediate reactions. D'Arms states: "… as agents with choices to make we still want and need to reflect upon which things are valuable in various ways. For almost all of us finding a sustainable set of evaluative convictions requires integrating one's commitment into a community of sufficiently like-minded creatures The role of emotional experience can lead to a source of input that can expand our system of convictions. We are then able to find values beyond the one acquired through introspection. It is specifically the reference to others that makes it possible to test whether or not we hold a justified moral belief. We can assign a large role to the emotions in this, but we need to take a distance from our own immediate reactions to acquire justified beliefs. Social influences are important. The ability to imagine what others think and feel is central to moral functioning. Being able to relate to others seems to be importantly predicated on our ability to think about their thoughts and feelings and being able to take up their perspective. Calling someone an agent then means that you hold him to certain norms. The way to determine these norms is through empathy and thus by relating emotionally and rationally. Because, as we saw the connection between an emotion and the concept of an emotion is set up by an emotion that we

favor to feel. We think of our emotion as appropriate (merited, justified, warranted) and frame the emotion in moral terms. Seeing the other as an agent and being seen by others as an agent are important features of our social life.

I have described how gut feelings relate to morality, by including cognition to judge our emotions to enter moral grounds. Then I have described that we need to find our moral standards not only through introspection but also unavoidably through a commitment to one's community, through social influences, by means of the concept of empathy. This means that empathy can be considered to be central to morality. If I define empathy as the means to belong to a group of moral agents, then a moral agent in this sense is an agent that belongs to the moral domain by virtue of his empathy.

Then I have one last step to take, which is to look back on my case study. The tension around the evaluation of the bully, bullying and aggression shows that the concept empathy offers a very useful connection between bullying and acting morally. Observations on empathic behavior provide insight into the *function* of emotional contagion and perspective taking for survival and reproduction. Developmental psychology *explains behavior* that is connected to this biological function in terms of prosocial behavior as a possible result of empathy. Morality *provides a concept* of empathy that allows us to formulate expectations, reflect on and evaluate behavior. That means that if we consider bullying in a sentimentalistic framework it becomes clear that morality is rather complex. While sociobiology might find people to be predisposed to behave empathically and psychology might find an individual adolescent to be capable of moral reasoning and feeling moral emotions, this does not mean behavior will always be in line with these findings. If I consider an agent to belong to the moral domain by virtue of his empathy, I have formulated a rather strong notion of moral agency. The concept of empathy I have described makes demands on a moral agent. Being able to feel and understand some one else's values, which asks for perspective taking and letting go of your own perspective for a moment, is both a cognitive and visceral process: we react to our emotions, but we also feel our convictions. In this ongoing process we relate our convictions and values to others. I think we need to consider this process ongoing, for adults as well as for adolescents. That means that even though we can address adolescents in moral terms and consider them to be moral agents, it is not surprising that in bullying the fun of bullying or the pride of their gained status wins out (at times, with some children) on the disapproval of bullying. Still, we can address bullies about their behavior in moral terms: we explain the wrongness of their actions and appeal to the entire group to uphold the class norm. Considering bullying from a moral point of view I can definitely subscribe to recently designed interventions for bullying that appeal to the responsibility of the entire class and school to solve bullying. In this appeal empathy plays its part, not because we are unselfish or predisposed to help, but because acting morally evolves around empathy.

(5) Conclusion

In *The Age of Empathy* de Waal quotes Darwin from *The Decent of Man*: "Any animal whatever, endowed with well-marked social instincts … would inevitably acquire a moral sense or conscience, as soon as its intellectual powers had become as well developed, or nearly as well developed, as in man." Social instincts, as described by both Darwin and de Waal, are undoubtedly part of being human. Both aggressive and prosocial behavior demonstrates human concern for community. "Developing intellectual powers" do not however lead to morality in a one-fold way. Even though we might compare human gut feelings to animal-like instincts, we need to be aware that complexity sets in when we enter

moral grounds. Reflection on the appropriateness of emotions reveals how we should consider ourselves not to be simply predisposed to have certain emotions, but instead, in relation to morality, favor certain emotions. To favor an emotion is probably as complex as the typically human capacities described by Korsgaard, such as the ability to reflect and anticipate.

Psychological research on bullying within an evolutionary framework seems to provide useful explanations of the behavior. However, this does not reflect on how we should evaluate aggressive behavior. We need to develop in addition a moral perspective to evaluate the bully. This moral perspective evolves around emotions that could once be considered as necessary for survival and reproduction, but are now defined I terms of 'matters of concern'. Through the course of this thesis, I have discussed ideas of how to adequately relate emotions to matters of concern and morality. It has turned to be necessary to include an element of cognition in emotion and an element of rationality in empathy. Empathy is conceptualized as a visceral and rational tool to acquire knowledge of the values of others.
This concept of empathy points to the fact that the bully should not be considered to be fully socially skilled and morally mature, despite his abilities such as being able to feel guilt and achieve his social goals. Considering empathy as central to acting morally, we need to emphasize with this concept of empathy that a bullying adolescent is still morally developing. However, we can hold him accountable and find bullying unacceptable and address the bully on his actions.

As indicated in the preface of this thesis I was happy to do my internship and it turned out to be fruitful. It triggered my curiosity for wanting to understand these bullies and their behavior in many ways. Also, and 'of course', it made me think about the relationship between psychology and philosophy. Humans we are more complex than primates. Psychology provides information on the way people behave; ethics can provide information on how people ought to behave. These two might (and do) not always align. The way things are does not necessarily say something about how things should be or how we wish them to be. However, this should not stop us to think about what we expect from ourselves, each other and how we wish to relate to peers, family and society.

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